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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, May 19

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

07:30 Took a walk around his official residence.  
09:56 Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura at the Kantei.  
10:00 Attended a cabinet meeting.  
11:30 Received a telephone call from President Rajapaksa of Sri Lanka in the presence of government representative Akashi.  
12:13 Met DPJ President Hatoyama and Secretary General Okada in the

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Diet building in the presence of LDP Secretary General Hosoda. Hosoda stayed on.

12:50 Attended an Upper House Budget Committee session.  
14:05 Met Vice-METI Minister Sugimoto and Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs Shinohara at the Kantei. Afterward met Lower House member Seiichi Ota, followed by Director of Cabinet Intelligence Mitani.  
15:44 Met Prime Minister Somare of Papua New Guinea  
16:20 Met Prime Minister Natapei of Vanuatu, followed by State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Hashimoto, Deputy Foreign Minister Sasae, Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director-General Saiki, Economic Security Division Director Tamaki, Global Environment Division Director Terada, in the presence of Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Matsumoto.  
18:07 Met a Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy meeting.  
19:48 Met Finance Minister Yosano.  
19:57 Met at a Hotel New Otani dining and bar LDP president special assistant Shimamura and Public Relations Headquarters chief Furuya.  
21:49 Returned to his official residence.

4) Lawyer John Roos named as U.S. envoy to Japan

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

Yoichi Kato, Washington

The Obama administration has now decided to name John Roos, 54, to the post of ambassador to Japan and has notified the Japanese government of the decision on May 19. Roos is a Silicon Valley-based lawyer, who handles the merger and acquisition of information technology businesses as his main area of activities and did much to help Obama win the presidential election. The Obama administration had been in the final stage of coordination to name Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye, but it eventually chose Roos, based on consideration given to his close relationship with President Obama.

Washington, now waiting for Tokyo's reply, is expected to announce the decision shortly. Roos will be appointed U.S. envoy to Japan once the Senate confirms him.

The Obama administration has forgone its final decision regarding the post of ambassador to Japan due to a delay in the whole process of political appointments. However, the administration last week announced its ambassador to China. Giving heed to the balance of Japan and China, the administration chose Roos in a hurry.

Roos is a Stanford Law School graduate. He entered a law firm in Silicon Valley, California, and is currently its chief executive officer. According to the law firm's website, Roos has expertise in corporate fundraising, business-related laws, and corporate governance. The website cites "Israel" as his foreign experience, and the "foreign language" section is left blank.

To put U.S. media reports together, Roos has backed Obama through

such activities as holding fundraising parties at his home before Obama's announcement of his candidacy in the presidential race. The New York Times reported in August 2008 that Roos was one of Obama's top fundraisers at the earliest stage. There is nothing in the U.S. media about whether he has had anything to do with Japan.

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It may safely be said that the Obama administration weighed Roos' close personal relationship with Obama over knowledge and experience like Nye's regarding foreign relations with Asia and Japan. Former Ambassador Schieffer, known for his close ties with President Bush, was such a case. The White House chose the Schieffer model and dropped Nye, according to an informed source.

5) Shii jumps for joy that "response is here!"; Head over heels in love with President Barack who "listens"

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

It is said that Chairman Kazuo Shii and other senior Japanese Communist Party (JCP) officials "jumped for joy" that a response to the letter the JCP had sent to U.S. President Barack Obama was received through the Department of State (according to a JCP watcher). The JCP had sent several letters to U.S. presidents in the past, but this is the first time in the party's history that an official reply has been received.

According to a news conference by Shii on May 19, the reply was received at the JCP headquarters in Sendagaya, Tokyo via international mail on May 16. The letter says: "I appreciate your (Shii's) enthusiasm. We hope to cooperate with the Japanese government to make concrete progress toward the goal of the abolition of nuclear weapons," among other things. Shii had sent a letter expressing his "heartfelt welcome" for Obama's speech in Prague calling for the abolition of nuclear arms. Shii appeared to be touched, saying that, "I am convinced that we now have a president who will listen to various opinions."

6) JCP Chairman Shii "wants to build friendly ties" after receiving U.S. government response

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

Shuichi Honda

Japanese Communist Party (JCP) Chairman Kazuo Shii disclosed at a news conference on May 19 that the U.S. government's response to his letter sent in late April to President Barack Obama, asking him to exercise leadership in abolishing nuclear weapons, was sent to him by assistant secretary of state-designate for East Asia and Pacific affairs J.C. Bancroft Davis on behalf of Obama. Shii said: "This is the first time we have received an official response from the U.S. government (since the party's founding 87 years ago). I can really feel that the American society has changed greatly," voicing his support for Obama.

A copy of the response dated May 5 was distributed at the news conference. It says: "I appreciate your enthusiasm. We would like to cooperate with the Japanese government to move forward steadily toward this goal." Shii said at his news conference that, "An official channel for dialogue with the U.S. government is now open. While we criticize U.S. policies frequently, we do not negate the United States per se. We would like to build friendly relations."

7) Aso to announce 50 billion yen program for Pacific Island nations to provide environmental technology

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NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

A summit between Japan and the Pacific Islands Forum (Pacific Island Leaders Meeting - PALM) will be held in the village of Shimukappu, Hokkaido, on May 22-23. A draft of the summit declaration - unveiled yesterday - proposes establishing a fund worth 50 billion yen in the next three years to finance measures to expand environmental technologies, for instance, to turn seawater into fresh water and to generate solar power. The draft also proposes fostering more 3,500 human resources. Prime Minister Taro Aso, who is to co-chair of the summit, will announce this program.

Identifying Japan and the participating countries as equal partners that share the Pacific Ocean, the draft comes up with a Pacific community initiative designed for these countries to jointly address the challenge of containing global warming. Based on the view that climate change mitigation and adapting measures are imperative for regional development, the summit-participating countries will aim to jointly tackle this challenge. The draft declaration proposes a program to disburse 50 billion yen in official development assistance (ODA) funds over the next three years for environmental technical cooperation and other measures. In the previous summit in 2006, Japan released a plan to disburse 45 billion yen. This year, Japan will propose a larger amount, in an attempt to play up its eagerness to help other participant countries in the environmental area.

Japan will establish a fund designed to urge the countries in the region to make use of Japanese companies' advanced desalination and solar power-generation technologies. The government plans to disburse the funds in response to each nation's needs. In addition to financial aid, Japan will call on the Forum members to take measures to prevent illegal dumping and other acts to pollute the environment.

The draft also includes a program to develop human resources by inviting engineers to Japan to learn environment-related technologies.

PALM has been held in Japan every three years since 1997. The fifth meeting this time will be joined by the leaders of 14 island countries and regions in the South Pacific region, such as Papua New Guinea, and Australia and New Zealand, in addition to Prime Minister Aso.

8) MSDF convoys 3.2 ships on average in waters off Somalia

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

A squadron of Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers, currently on an antipiracy mission in waters off Somalia, escorts 3.2 ships on average each time, the Defense Ministry revealed yesterday in its documentation presented to the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) in a meeting of the party's foreign affairs and defense division. "This is a half of the government's prior account and is a waste of the taxpayers' money," a DPJ executive said. The DPJ will pursue this in the House of Councillors' deliberations that will begin shortly to debate a government-introduced antipiracy bill.

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The MSDF, which started its antipiracy mission in late March, has been escorting Japanese-registered and Japan-linked ships in the 900-kilometer Gulf of Aden, taking two days each way. According to the document, the MSDF carried out a total of 17 escorts up to May 13 and convoyed a total of 55 ships, or 3.2 ships each escort on average. Prime Minister Aso, in his Diet reply in late January, stated that the average number of Japanese and Japan-linked ships escorted there was about five or six per day on average.

The MSDF is now thinking of cutting each of its fleet convoys from two destroyers to one for more frequent escorts.

9) MSDF gets info from foreign navies on suspicious vessels

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

The Maritime Self-Defense Force - currently on an antipiracy mission in waters off the eastern African coast of Somalia - has been provided with information about nearby suspicious vessels via a network used by foreign navies, the Defense Ministry revealed yesterday. The Diet has not deepened its discussion of anything specific about information exchanges or cooperation with foreign naval forces. Meanwhile, the MSDF is presumably asked to exchange information or cooperate with foreign naval ships on stage there.

According to the Defense Ministry, the MSDF shares information about suspicious vessels via the Internet and can exchange information with foreign naval ships via email. Actually, the MSDF has already responded twice based on this information. This could affect Diet deliberations on a government-introduced antipiracy bill that will allow the MSDF to escort every ship.

10) Serious discord between Japan and Australia, Europe as IWC working group results in failure to reach whaling consensus

ASAHI (Page 10) (Full)  
Evening, May 19, 2009

Shigeo Tosa, London

The International Whaling Commission (IWC - headquarters in Cambridge, United Kingdom) issued a report of its Small Working Group (SWG) charged with drafting a proposed agreement for the next annual convention to be held in Portugal this June on May 18.

The report says that the SWG failed to resolve the disagreement between Japan, a whaling nation, and anti-whaling Australia and European countries over the resumption of coastal whaling in Japan and research whaling in the Southern Ocean, and that it is now certain that an agreement will have to be deferred to the 2010 convention.

In order to normalize the IWC, which has become dysfunctional due to the longstanding conflict between pro- and anti-whaling nations, IWC Chair William Hogarth proposed in February a compromise in the form of temporary measures allowing limited whaling by Japan in its coastal waters in exchange for phasing out research whaling in the Antarctic and reducing the catch in five years. It was agreed at the IWC intersessional meeting in Rome in March that the SWG would strive to reach a consensus.

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However, Japan maintained its position of opposing the discontinuation of research whaling and attempted only to reach agreement on reducing the catch. This was rejected by the anti-whaling nations, and as a result the SWG failed to reach a consensus.

(For the full text of the SWG report, go to  
<http://www.iwcoffice.org/documents/commission/IWC61docs/61-6.pdf>)

11) IWC forgoes whaling decision

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

Jiji, London

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) released its working group's report on May 18 regarding consensus overtures on specific matters such as resuming Japan's coastal whaling. According to the report, there has been no compromise between pro-whaling nations and anti-whaling nations. It is now almost certain that the IWC will forgo its conclusion until its annual meeting in 2010.

12) Kampo Life Insurance's cancer insurance: U.S. calls on Japan to provide level playing field

Yusuke Yoneyama, Washington

The governments of Japan and the U.S. on May 18 held a high working-level meeting to discuss regulatory reform and completion policy. In connection with the consolidation of a high-speed railroad system, the Japanese side expressed concern about the possibility of the Buy-American Clause that mandates the use of U.S.-made products being applied. The U.S. side asked for a level playing field for private companies, including American companies, in competing with Kampo Life Insurance for the sale of cancer insurance.

Both countries agreed on cooperation for the consolidation of a high-speed railroad system in the U.S. at the bilateral summit in February. However, since the U.S. transportation-related legal system has an article stipulating that priority should be given to U.S. products in government procurements, the Japanese side called for the application of an exemption rule so that the article will not hamper Japan from cooperating for the construction of the high-speed railroad system in the U.S. in the future.

In connection with the rebuilding of the American International Group (AIG), the Japanese side called for revisions to the present system of each state regulating and supervising insurers.

13) Hatoyama-led DPJ to employ pressure strategy of extending cooperation in Diet deliberations and keeping the Upper House's stance ambiguous

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)  
May 20, 2009

The new leadership of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan

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(DPJ) got underway yesterday. The party's pressing matter is Diet deliberations over the fiscal 2009 supplementary budget bill. The party intends to employ the strategy of throwing things into confusion for the ruling camp regarding an extension of the Diet session and dissolving the House of Representatives by blurring the timing of taking a vote in the House of Councillors. The party also plans to seek an opportunity to go on the offensive through the first party-head debate between Yukio Hatoyama and Prime Minister Taro Aso set for May 27. Nevertheless, a political donation scandal involving Nishimatsu Construction Co. that led to Ichiro Ozawa's resignation as president, might tie down the main opposition's hand.

President Yukio Hatoyama called in yesterday morning Secretary General Katsuya Okada, three deputy presidents -- Ichiro Ozawa, Naoto Kan, and Azuma Koshiishi -- and Diet Affairs Committee Chair Kenji Yamaoka to discuss future measures for Diet affairs. As a result, they confirmed a policy course to allow the Lower House to take a vote later this week on four of the five budget-related bills, including a bill to amend the Development Bank of Japan Law. The DPJ's aim is to block the ruling camp from making an early decision on extending the Diet session by demonstrating a cooperative stance for Diet deliberations.

Leadership in Upper House

Meanwhile, the Upper House Budget committee will hold a question-and-answer session today on the extra budget bill in the presence of all cabinet ministers, including Prime Minister Aso. If the related bills can pass through the Lower House at an early date, the DPJ would be able to take the leadership in the opposition-controlled Upper House.

The budget bill is scheduled to automatically clear the Diet on June 12 due to the constitutional superiority of the Lower House. But if the opposition bloc votes down or fails to take action on the related bills, the Lower House would have to readopt them. The DPJ apparently wants to keep the Upper House's stance toward the related

bills equivocal as long as possible in order to have the upper hand in bargaining with the ruling bloc over an extension of the Diet session which is closely associated with Lower House dissolution.

This can explain why Hatoyama made the following comment in a press conference yesterday: "We should neither drag out deliberations unnecessarily nor call for ending deliberations to take a vote for an early dissolution of the Lower House. A vote should be taken after thorough deliberations and fair debates."

Asked during a BS program on May 18 about the possibility of boycotting deliberations, DPJ Upper House member Koshiishi said, "In order to get the problems understood by the public, we naturally have such a step in mind."

14) My brother is a puppet: Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Hatoyama

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

At a press conference after the cabinet meeting yesterday, Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Kunio Hatoyama criticized the new leadership of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). He said:

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"Everyone thinks that (DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama) is a puppet of former President Ichiro Ozawa." Other cabinet ministers made critical comments on the new DPJ executive lineup.

Akira Amari, minister of state for administrative reform, pointed to the assumption of Ozawa as deputy DPJ president: "He has now assumed the position in which he does not bear accountability. even though he holds the influence over the party." He blasted at the DPJ, saying: "The way of managing the party that Mr. Ozawa believes ideal has now been formed. He can now control the party behind the scene."

Kunio Hatoyama said: "I have always thought of cooperation between our brothers. However, I will not cooperate with him unless he distances himself from Ozawa." He then added: "He should not have approved holding the presidential election in an undemocratic manner."

National Public Safety Commission Chairman Tsutomu Sato emphasized: "(Ozawa) has not fulfilled his accountability in most areas." Seiko Noda, minister of state for consumer affairs, made ironical remarks: "The DPJ executives include no fresh person. Unfortunately, I have no rival."

15) First Aso-Hatoyama debate on May 27; DPJ gives priority to party-heads debate over political situation?

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)  
May 20, 2009

At a general meeting of its lawmakers from both Diet chambers, the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) yesterday approved its new executive lineup. New DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama officially launched his party set up yesterday. Hatoyama has already decided to accept the holding of a one-on-one debate with Prime Minister Taro Aso on May 27. Although he intends to play up his own political identity, the ruling parties aim to shed light on the Hatoyama-led DPJ's weakness through the upcoming debate at the Diet.

At the general meeting, Hatoyama vowed: "Our party must unite to win the next House of Representatives election." He retained all ministers of the "Next Cabinet," keeping personnel changes to a minimum. He has made it clear to give top priority on election strategy for the next general election.

Hatoyama intends to proactively respond to the holding of a party-heads debate, but not to take a stance of always clashing with Aso in the Diet. His aim is to wipe away the image of his being a puppet of former President Ichiro Ozawa by demonstrating differences



between himself and Ozawa.

When he visited Aso at noon yesterday, he said: "I want to hold as many head-to-head debates as possible. It is important to have debates that are easy to understand for the public." He intends to play up the need for a change in government in order to break away from the bureaucracy-controlled politics, criticizing the government-drafted economic stimulus package as "one year of pork-barreling." He also told Aso his intention that he was negative about dragging out deliberations. He said: "I will not carry out the old-fashioned opposition's Diet management."

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However, Aso sought to constrain Hatoyama, noting: "The Diet has been divided since the move of forming a grand coalition (in 2007)." The two leaders did not shake hands before the press corps.

Despite Hatoyama's words, many observers view that there is little leeway for the DPJ to drastically change its strategy for Diet management. This is because the DPJ has already decided on whether it will approve or not important bills and because other opposition parties are calling for taking a confrontational stance against the ruling camp.

16) Ozawa may now find it easier to make moves; Responsible for election strategy but giving no regular interviews

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)  
May 20, 2009

Former Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) president Ichiro Ozawa has now become the party's vice president for election strategy. This has sparked speculation that the new post has made it easier for Ozawa to maneuver.

Yesterday morning, the new DPJ leadership held its first executive meeting with its executive board members attending. In the meeting, Ozawa simply said: "I was told by Mr. Hatoyama to take charge of elections. I will do my best." Last night, Ozawa dined with first-term Lower House member at a Chinese restaurant in Nagatacho. There, Ozawa indicated a high likelihood that the next Lower House election would take place before the O-bon mid-August holidays.

Earlier in the day, the DPJ held a general meeting of Diet members from both chambers. In the session, Secretary General Katsuya Okada, who is supposed to take the lead in elections, jokingly said: "Three heavyweights have now become vice presidents. I wonder if I can support them." In a meeting held later by Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Okada said, "Primarily, Vice President Ozawa will be responsible for practical affairs."

Of the three top DPJ executives, Ozawa alone will not hold regular interviews. Reportedly, Ozawa will have his offices on the eighth floor of party headquarters as well as on the fourth floor where there is the office of the election strategy council.

17) LDP's Koga: Low voter turnout is better

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

Appearing on BS Fuji TV program yesterday, Makoto Koga, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Election Strategy Council, said: "If the turnout of voters is not high, it will be good (for the LDP). In the past, high turnout rates did the LDP good, but I am concerned recently that the turnout may be high." He revealed his perception that a high voter turnout would not do the LDP any good.

During the 2000 House of Representatives election campaigning, then Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori said: "I want (unaffiliated voters) to stay home and not vote." His remark created a stir. After the end of the TV program, Koga told reporters: "I do not mean that I want voters not to go to polling stations. I think my expression was not good." However, his comment might cause a commotion.

When asked about whether the election would be held on Aug. 9 as speculated, Koga pointed out that day commemorates the dropping of the atomic bomb. He then took a negative stance, saying: "I think such an idea is not impossible, but difficult in common-sense terms. As the only atomic-bombed country, Aug. 9 is a special day."

18) Division of Welfare Ministry as showcase of Lower House election campaign

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)  
May 20, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso has ordered the preparation of concrete plans for the split and reorganization of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), firming up a policy of incorporating such a plan to split and reorganize the ministry in the Liberal Democratic Party's manifesto (campaign promises) for the next Lower House election. His aim is to appeal to the public through a stance of giving priority to people's lives when they are highly concerned about the future of social security and employment.

Since the LDP has used up all available economic stimulus measures in the fiscal 2009 extra budget, it lacks policies that appeal to the public. As an LDP member who previously served as an economic minister put it, Aso wants to use the proposal as the showcase in his campaign pledges for the upcoming Lower House election. However, it is unclear whether the plan to split the MHLW can secure public support. Some point out that the plan runs counter to the government's administrative reform policy.

The LDP will soon launch a project team to consider a manifesto for the next Lower House election in parallel with State Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Kaoru Yosano compiling a concrete plan. The plan will become one of the main agenda items to be discussed by the panel and a main pillar of the manifesto.

Yosano told a press conference after a meeting of the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy on the evening of May 19, "The order to split and reorganize the MHLW came from the prime minister like a bolt of lightning." However, as several government and LDP-related sources said, "Mr. Yosano is eager to split and reorganize the MHLW," Yosano presumably made that comment with displaying the prime minister's leadership in mind.

The Round Table to Discuss the Way Welfare and Labor Administration Should Be, set up by former prime minister Yasuo Fukuda, looked into splitting the MHLW. However, it did not reach a decision because although there is a consensus on the split of the MHLW in the party, such a plan could spark similar demands from other government agencies that want to increase their authorities and posts, according to a source related to the LDP Policy Research Council. There is, for instance, an argument in the LDP calling for splitting up the Internal Affairs Ministry's internal affairs administration and communications administration. In order to stave off a chaotic state, it is necessary to prevent such arguments from escalating. The expansion of spin-off organizations of the MHLW could result in criticism that MHLW bureaucrats are enjoying "Prosperity after the fire," as a mid-ranking Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) official put it. The government and the LDP will likely be asked to provide explanations which people can accept.

ZUMWALT